

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to David Kay, former CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Remarks on Signing the American Heart Month Proclamation** *February 2, 2004*

**The President.** Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the kind introduction. [*Laughter*] I don't know why you reminded them about the pretzel. [*Laughter*] I am so pleased you all are here. I want to thank Members of the United States Senate who came today, starting with Majority Leader Bill Frist, and Karyn. We're honored you are here. Thanks for coming. Thad Cochran, Susan Collins, and Byron Dorgan, you all are really kind to join us here. It's really important for the Congress to be involved with this initiative, as well as the White House.

I appreciate my friend Elias Zerhouni. He's doing a fabulous job at the National Institute of Health. You really have taken on a tough assignment, and you've done it with such class. Thank you for your service.

I want to thank all the survivors of heart disease who are here. I asked the Vice President what he was up to. [*Laughter*]

**The First Lady.** What did he say?

**The President.** He said he was heading to the treadmill. [*Laughter*] I want to thank everybody who is—who shares in this important cause. I really appreciate Laura for helping to lead The Heart Truth, the campaign to educate women about heart disease. I'm really proud of you.

By spreading vital information, this campaign will save women's lives. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women—and men—so it's important that we send this heart truth message to all our citizens, to all Americans.

It's also important for people to know that the risk of heart disease can be greatly reduced with good diet and regular exercise. Whatever our age or physical condition or

however busy we may be, we can all do something to stay healthy, and that's important.

The miracles of modern medicine we now enjoy make us forget some wisdom from the past, such as, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It made sense then, and it makes sense today, particularly when you're dealing with heart disease. And so we started what's called the HealthierUS Initiative, which is encouraging Americans to focus on four simple goals: Exercise daily, eat right, avoid tobacco, drugs, and excessive alcohol, and get preventive screenings to detect problems early.

By focusing on these commonsense steps, we can save many lives we lose each year to preventable conditions like heart disease. In other words, just do some wise things with your life. It's just not all that complicated, but it's up to you to make the right choice. It's up to our fellow citizens to make the right decision necessary to protect their bodies.

I want to thank all of you all for working so hard to help citizens make the right choice, to send a clear message, to help people understand the need for healthier lives in America.

And now it's my honor to welcome the heart disease survivors to join Laura and me as I sign the proclamation of American Heart Month, 2004.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Karyn Frist, wife of Senator Bill Frist.

### **Proclamation 7754—American Heart Month, 2004**

*February 2, 2004*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. It affects men and women of every age and race. During American Heart Month, we encourage all Americans to join the fight against heart disease and to learn more about how to prevent it.

More than 64 million Americans suffer from one or more forms of cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, and congenital heart defects. Many of the risk factors that can lead to heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and diabetes, can be prevented or controlled. Research has shown that men and women who lead healthy lifestyles, including making healthy food choices, getting regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, and choosing not to smoke or drink excessively, can significantly decrease their risk of heart disease.

Heart disease is responsible for the deaths of one in three women in the United States. To make women more aware of the danger of heart disease, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health has joined with the Department of Health and Human Services and other national organizations to launch a nationwide campaign called "The Heart Truth." This important campaign encourages women to learn more about heart health, to lead healthier lives, and to talk with their doctors about their risk for developing heart disease.

During American Heart Month, I urge all Americans to learn more about heart health and to reduce their risk factors for serious heart conditions. By making healthy choices, we can live longer and better lives.

In recognition of the important ongoing fight against heart disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 101), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 2004 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating heart disease.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this second day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of

the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:02 a.m., February 3, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 4.

### **Proclamation 7755—National Consumer Protection Week, 2004**

*February 2, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Every day, America's consumers conduct millions of financial transactions. During National Consumer Protection Week, we recognize those who help to safeguard our citizens from consumer fraud, and we encourage all Americans to be informed consumers. This year's theme, "Financial Literacy: Earning a Lifetime of Dividends," highlights the importance of financial education to consumer protection.

The Federal Government provides many educational resources and programs to help protect Americans against fraud by giving them information about their options in the marketplace. The Federal Trade Commission and more than 100 other Federal agencies have collaborated on a website, [www.consumer.gov](http://www.consumer.gov), which provides helpful information ranging from how credit ratings work to how to buy a new car. The Department of the Treasury has also established an Office of Financial Education to oversee inter-agency efforts to coordinate and expand financial education initiatives.

In addition, my Administration is working to expand financial literacy for potential homeowners. We have doubled the funds for housing and financial counseling services, including those run by faith-based and community groups, and we are distributing millions of dollars in grants to national, State, and local organizations that promote home buyer education and counseling. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is also